

Nishkam Primary School

Birmingham

3-7 Soho Road, Handsworth, Birmingham, B21 9SN

Inspection dates 23–24 April 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Early years provision		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- The acting headteacher and assistant headteacher have been highly effective in improving the school a great deal in all areas of its work since it was last inspected.
- Rigorous checks on teaching by senior leaders have had a very positive impact in making sure that teaching has improved enormously over the last two years.
- Children get off to an excellent start in the extremely effective Reception classes, and are prepared exceptionally well for their move into Year 1.
- All groups of pupils at all ages make rapid progress. They achieve high standards in relation to their different starting points.
- Class teachers and associate teachers (extra adult support in class) aim high and always want pupils to do their very best. They provide teaching of excellent quality, and set demanding work that stimulates pupils and moves them on quickly in their learning.
- Adults make sure pupils become competent learners. They give pupils many opportunities to use and strengthen their learning skills.
- Senior leaders and teachers check pupils' learning regularly and provide prompt support for any who are in danger of falling behind. However, assessment systems have not yet been updated for teachers to check pupils' progress through the new curriculum.
- Pupils behave extremely well at all times. They are exceptionally polite and courteous to each other and to adults. This creates an environment that is highly conducive to effective learning.
- Pupils are kept very safe at all times. They enjoy school and attendance is above average.
- Members of the Board of Directors and the school's governors keep very close contact with the school and know it exceptionally well. They have high expectations for all staff members, which they make clear through setting challenging targets for teachers' work. They play a central role in planning for the school's development and improvement.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils’ learning in 16 lessons. Ten of the observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher or the deputy headteacher. In addition inspectors completed short observations to get an overview of one-to-one and small group support for particular groups of pupils and the quality of the school’s curriculum.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and looked at the work in books.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documentation, including the school’s own judgements on its strengths and weaknesses, and the data it collects on pupils’ progress. Documents detailing the school’s arrangements for safeguarding were reviewed and discussed.
- Meetings were held with governors, senior leaders, associate teachers and pupils. A meeting was held with a representative of the Board of Directors.
- Questionnaire responses from 31 members of staff were analysed.
- Inspectors took account of 59 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and received letters from parents.

Inspection team

David Speakman, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Aleksander Szwagrzak	Additional Inspector
Jane Millward	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Nishkam Primary School opened in September 2011 as a two-form entry school. It has grown steadily in size since opening. At the time of this inspection, there were two full classes in each of the year groups from Reception to Year 5 and a small cohort in Year 6. There were no pupils in Year 6 in 2013-14. Children attend Reception full time.
- The school is part of the multi-academy trust of schools known as the Nishkam School Trust. It is a multi-faith school with a Sikh ethos, with up to half of its admission places being open to children of all faiths and the remaining half to those of none.
- All pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. Three-quarters are Indian. At almost 45%, the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or in the care of the local authority) is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs is also below average.
- The school runs a breakfast club before school each day.
- The school was inspected under Section 48 (inspections of faith schools) in December 2014.
- Since the school was last inspected by Ofsted, a high proportion of the teaching staff have joined or taken on new responsibilities:
 - after the previous inspection, the headteacher left the school
 - the deputy headteacher (Mrs Palbinder Kaur Brom) was acting headteacher from September 2013 to three days before this inspection took place. She has been supported by the assistant head in running the school
 - a new headteacher joined the school in April 2015
 - eight teachers have joined the school, four of these were additional teachers due to the expansion of the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Update the current systems for checking pupils' progress so they are consistent with the newly developed curriculum, so teachers and senior leaders will still be able to identify and support quickly any pupils in danger of falling behind.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The leaders of the trust and of the school have been highly effective in establishing an environment in which all, adults and pupils alike, have a strong desire to do their very best and achieve highly. This is a place in which adults develop professionally and pupils excel academically and in their personal growth.
- Rigorous and regular checks on the quality of teaching are central to the rapid improvement in this school. The assistant headteacher and the acting headteacher work closely with each other to develop teachers' and associate teachers' skills. They observe teaching, look closely at the progress shown in pupils' books, drop in to lessons, talk to pupils to find out how well they think they are doing and scrutinise the assessments teachers make on pupils' progress. They use this information extremely effectively to identify areas of weakness in teaching and the follow-up 'coaching' has had an exceptional impact.
- Subject leaders are highly effective. They direct their areas of responsibility and subjects very well. They check closely on pupils' progress and provide timely support where needed. As a result all pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, pupils who speak English as an additional language, the most able and those in Reception do extremely well. Detailed assessment records are kept and used effectively. However, systems have not yet been updated to make an easy transfer to assessing pupils' progress through the new national curriculum.
- The school makes sure that there is no discrimination of any kind and that all pupils are treated equally. All pupils are given the opportunity to be included in all activities. The school quickly identifies the particular needs of individual pupils and makes sure these are met. Consequently, all pupils make outstanding progress.
- The school places a strong emphasis on safeguarding pupils. Full checks are made on all adults coming into contact with pupils and details recorded carefully. Thorough risk assessments and safety checks take place regularly to ensure all the school's activities are safe for pupils.
- The curriculum is of high quality. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted exceptionally well throughout the different subjects and through the everyday life in the school. Assemblies are used very effectively to promote the school's values and to reward pupils' best academic, sporting, musical and personal achievements. High standards are encouraged in everything the school does. Pupils learn to respect themselves and others, and this shows in the way pupils work and play together harmoniously. Pupils are encouraged to use their highly developed understanding of right and wrong to make sensible choices.
- The school ensures that pupils develop a strong awareness of living in a multicultural country and know about British values. They learn about democracy through holding elections for positions of responsibility, with candidates preparing their own manifestoes. They understand the need for rules and that individuals have responsibilities to others as well as their own rights. They have a strong code of conduct through which they respect all others, whatever their background.
- Pupil premium funding is used very effectively to improve the progress of disadvantaged pupils by providing high-quality one-to-one and small group support. The funding is also used to enrich pupils' experiences in school by enhancing resources and the school environment, and enabling qualifying pupils to attend school clubs and other events.
- The school has made detailed and highly effective arrangements for spending the primary sports funding. It is used to widen opportunities for pupils to take part in sporting activities, and to improve teachers' expertise through attending training courses. Leaders monitor the impact of this spending and can demonstrate its impact through pupils' increased participation in sport and teachers' increased confidence in teaching physical education.

■ The Nishkam board of directors provides excellent support and challenge for the school. Directors ensure that policies are effective and meet current requirements, and they set out challenging targets. Central to the work of the directors is establishing a vision of excellence and a set of values that underpin the work of the schools in the trust. The board of directors has a strong influence on the work of the school and has successfully guided the school into a position of excellence.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governance is very effective. The board of governors works very well with senior leaders to monitor the quality of education. Its members are well informed through regular visits to the school to see first-hand what is happening in school. They have made an important contribution to the school's improvement.
- Good knowledge of the school and professional expertise place governors in a strong position to challenge senior leaders over the school's performance. They have a clear understanding of the information on how pupils are doing academically and use this information to ask leading questions about the effectiveness of teaching. As a result they have a very clear idea of its quality. They understand fully how much and why Nishkam Primary has improved.
- They set clear targets in managing the performance of the headteacher and staff, making sure teachers' pay increases are linked to their competence and that excellence is rewarded.
- Governors ensure that all requirements are met, and that safeguarding arrangements are very effective.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. This helps create a calm atmosphere in and around school so pupils enjoy being there. Parents, staff and pupils agree that behaviour is of a high quality and pupils speak very positively about behaviour.
- Relationships between pupils, and between pupils and adults, are of the highest quality. Pupils are keen to please. They work hard in lessons and, take care to present their work very neatly and tidily. They take care of the site, buildings and learning resources, all of which are kept in an excellent condition.
- Pupils of all ages and of all abilities have an exceptionally positive approach to learning. They attempt new work with confidence and set out to do their very best. They quickly become skilled at evaluating the quality of their own and others' work and at identifying ways in which they could improve it. This contributes massively to their learning and to their excellent achievement.
- Pupils take on the wide range of responsibilities on offer. They take their jobs, such as school councillors or class ambassadors, very seriously and do their jobs very well.
- Attendance is above average and pupils come to school on time.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils have a very good understanding of safe and unsafe situations and know how to avoid danger when out of school. Virtually all parents who responded to the online questionnaire agree that their children are safe in school.
- Pupils are fully aware that there are different types of bullying and they know what to do if they ever need help. Bullying in school is not a worry to these pupils but they are confident that should it ever happen, it would be dealt with straight away. Very few parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire showed any concern about this sort of unacceptable behaviour.
- Vulnerable pupils are cared for exceptionally well. Child protection procedures are thorough and staff are vigilant. All staff are rigorously checked before appointment. Safeguarding training for staff and governors is up to date.

- Pupils are very well cared for in the popular breakfast club. This has a positive impact on the health and nutrition, ability to socialise, attendance and punctuality to school.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Teachers have high expectations of pupils and set hard work that interests and challenges them. Both teachers and associate teachers are skilled in recognising when pupils are ready to move on or need some extra support. They adapt the pace at which lessons progress in response to pupils' learning.
- Outstanding teaching of reading, writing, and mathematics shows in the excellent progress they make from the start of Reception onwards. Regular guided reading sessions and many opportunities for pupils to read for pleasure help pupils develop a love of reading and to develop the skills to become very capable readers. Pupils have many opportunities to solve problems in mathematics to deepen understanding and use mathematical skills they have learned in every-day situations. Opportunities to write are numerous and cross over subjects so pupils become very competent writers.
- Teachers work in close partnership with the skilled and effective associate teachers, who also benefit from training to improve their teaching and increase their impact on pupils' learning. This highly effective partnership is a key factor in the rapid progress pupils make and the high standards achieved.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and thoroughly. Comments provide precise individual feedback to pupils so they know exactly how to improve their work. Pupils regularly respond to the valuable comments so any mistakes in their learning are soon corrected.
- Teachers use questions to excellent effect. They encourage pupils to take a lead role in class discussions, while asking searching questions that are matched well to pupils' capabilities.
- Class teachers and associate teachers teach disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs very well. Early identification of their needs means support is provided promptly. In most cases this early support is so effective that they soon reach the nationally expected levels for their age.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils is checked very carefully. Qualifying pupils are taught exceptionally well through focused support in small groups or through one-to-one support.

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Since the school was last inspected, standards at the end of Year 2 have been rising steadily. Attainment was above average overall and in writing in both 2013 and 2014. In reading and mathematics, attainment has also been rising steadily. This year attainment has continued to rise and pupils in Year 2 are on track to achieve above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. This means pupils have made excellent progress from their starting points at the beginning of the key stage.
- Pupils achieve very well in developing their reading skills at Key Stage 1. In 2014 results of the Year 1 phonics screening test (which checks knowledge of letters and the sounds they make) showed a great improvement over results in 2013. The proportions of boys, of girls and of the whole cohort who reached the required standard were well above the national averages. This rise is set to continue this year.
- School assessment data, samples of pupils' work and lesson observations show that pupils achieve exceptionally well in Key Stage 2. The proportions making expected progress and more than expected progress exceed the national proportions. Current attainment in Year 6 is already exceptionally high in English and mathematics with this small group of pupils having made outstanding progress over time. In other year groups, pupils are working at levels that are above those expected for their ages.
- Disadvantaged pupils make excellent progress. Gaps in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils in school and with other pupils nationally at the end of Year 2 have closed. Throughout the rest of the school, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils exceeds that nationally expected for their age.

and is in line with other pupils in the school.

- The most-able pupils achieve exceptionally well throughout the school, including in Reception. The percentages of pupils reaching the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics are well above average in both Key Stages 1 and 2. This is because they attempt work at a very challenging level, which moves them on rapidly.
- Pupils' high levels and excellent progress in literacy and mathematics are reflected in a wide range of subjects. They are very fluent and speak clearly and confidently. Their writing in topic work, geography, and science and that on display around the school is of a high quality. In science they use number and measures accurately and use graphs accurately.
- Pupils from minority ethnic groups, including Indian pupils, achieve very well. Those who speak English as an additional language soon acquire enough English to access the full curriculum. From this point they make excellent progress.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs also make outstanding progress in reading, writing and mathematics through very effective and well-targeted support. Their attainment matches that nationally expected for their ages. Excellent progress can be seen in lessons and in pupils' books.

The early years provision

is outstanding

- Excellent leadership and very close teamwork have created an exciting and stimulating environment for children to learn in. Displays focusing on language, number, a range of topics and children's own work provide numerous sources of information to stimulate children's interest and curiosity. The outstanding leadership has ensured that all aspects of the provision for early years are highly effective.
- Adults have a thorough knowledge of each child and provide a range of activities to cover all aspects of their development. There is a strong emphasis on learning through discovery, exploration and children finding things out for themselves. Adults provide an excellent range of high-quality resources, both indoors and outside, to support all areas of learning.
- There is also a strong emphasis on reading, writing, mathematics and children's personal development. Children make excellent progress from starting points that are often below those typical for their ages, particularly in English. The proportion achieving a good level of development by the time they transfer into Year 1 is close to the national average.
- Teaching is very effective, with the teaching of phonics being a strength. The pace of learning is rapid so children learn a great deal across a range of areas in a short time. Adults show very high expectations and move children on to the next steps in learning as soon as they are ready.
- Children's behaviour in the Reception classes is outstanding. They get on really well with each other and work harmoniously in small groups. They respond very quickly to adults' requests to come together as a group or to clear up the work areas at the end of sessions. They listen politely to adults and to each other and concentrate for long periods.
- There is a strong emphasis on children's safety, with regular risk assessments on children's activities.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	137492
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	462593

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	360
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Brinder Singh Mahon
Headteacher	Catherine Heels
Date of previous school inspection	7 October 2013
Telephone number	0121 647 6890
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Email address	enquiries@nishkamprimary.org

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